

Indigenism, Anarchism, Feminism: An Emerging Framework for Exploring Post-Imperial Futures¹

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Abstract

Introduction to Anarch@Indigenism edition of *Affinities* Journal:
“Working Across Difference for Post-Imperial Futures: Intersections
Between Anarchism, Indigenism and Feminism.”

Introduction

Despite claims that they have been entirely overcome, colonialism and imperialism continue to be deeply implicated in the innumerable and often bloody conflicts that besiege the contemporary world. A more just and peaceful world requires an examination of these power relations through the visioning of post-imperial futures within the global political order. Many critically-oriented scholars, in approaches as varied as postmodernism, feminism, and cultural studies, have critiqued power relations of the Westphalian system of nation-state sovereignty, revealing its constitutive ideological and discursive practices, its gendered structures, and its embedded hierarchies (Ashley 1988; Dillon 1995; Hall et al 1995; Peterson 2000; Tickner 2005; Walker 1993). Critical international relations theorists have effectively dispelled the binaries between foreign and domestic, bridged the distance between global and local, and documented the intertwining of statecraft, nation-building, and an inter-state system that is in constant creation and contestation. Furthermore, many feminists continue to demonstrate the interlocking projects of patriarchy, racism and capitalism through which (neo)colonialism and (neo)imperialism is anchored (Enloe 1990; Enloe 2000; McClintock 1995; Merry 2000; Moreton-Robinson 2007; Smith 2005).

One approach which has yet to be considered thoroughly is that of indigenism, which reflects creative linkages between place-based struggles and transnational networks as enactments of self-determination in reconfiguring international relations and challenging (neo)colonial hierarchies within the state and inter-state system (Castree 2004; Clifford 2001; Ivison 2000; Maaka and Fleras 2005; Niezen 2003; Shaw 2004; Soguk 2007). Importantly, the ‘self’ is not the sovereign man nor is the ‘nation’ the demarcated body politic of the traditional imaginings of western political science. Rather, indigenism asserts an altogether

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different registry in which to understand *relations* within local and global landscapes. Additionally, while the 'anarchy' problematic has been central to discussions of world politics, anarchism itself, as a theoretical approach and political practice, has been all but neglected in the broader study of global politics despite compelling scholarship of its historical and continuing relevance to democratic governance practices and mass social movements (Adams 2003; Anderson 2005; Antliff 2004; Bookchin 2004; Day 2005; Ferguson 2011, May 1994).

Focusing on these inadequately developed areas of political theory, all the articles of this edition of *Affinities Journal* explore the intersections of three well-established, but often separately considered traditions: anarchism, indigenism and feminism, and the praxis potential therein.³ While anarchism typically focuses on capitalism and the state form, indigenism on racism and decolonization/anti-imperialism, and feminism on gendered relations and patriarchy/heterosexism, each of these traditions also deals with the primary concerns of the others, and all of them have engaged with other analyses. This interplay of diverse traditions, what some are calling 'anarch@indigenism' (Alfred et al 2007) forges intersectional analysis and fosters a praxis to de-center and un-do multiple axes of oppression. In other words, anarch@indigenism attempts to link critical ideas and visions of post-imperial futures in ways that are non-hierarchical, unsettling⁴ of state authorities, inclusive of multiple/plural ways of being in the world, and respectful of the autonomous agencies of collective personhood (Alfred 2005; Aragorn! 2005; Arthur 2007; Churchill 2005; Day 2001; MujeresCreando 2002; Weatherford 1988).

This intersectionality of indigenism, anarchism and feminism is significant in the field of global studies, particularly critical engagements therein, for at least three reasons. First, with the end of the cold war and ongoing 'war on terror,' an intensification of global capitalism, the expansive use of communication technology (among many other developments), and democratic uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, we are clearly in an era of profound transition (Appadurai 1996; Bartelson 1995; Burawoy et al 2000; Donaway 2003; Sassen 1996; Wallerstein and Hopkins 1996). What is being called anarch@indigenism offers an emerging theoretical framework and praxis for transversing this transitory terrain. Second, the perennial tensions between universal and particular, between 'us' and 'them,' male and female genderings, and boundaries of (within and between) political communities, continue to be violently contested all the while seemingly irrelevant given the realities of hybridity (Hall 1997; Hoffman 1998; Nancy 1991; Nancy 2000; Nandy 1998; Stychin 1998). The non-hierarchical, intersectional analysis forged in anarch@indigenism, and its inclusivity of multiple/plural ways of being in the world, reveal possibilities for more just negotiations of such tensions in alignment

with the realities of our shared world. And third, following upon the seminal work of Michel Foucault, it is vitally important to understand how power circulates in multifarious relations and intersubjectivities that are produced, reproduced and continually contested in the governmentalities of our time (Agamben 1993; Agamben 1998; Darian-Smith and Fitzpatrick 1999; Dean 1999; Edkins 2004; Goldberg-Hiller 2003; Shapiro 2004). As a site of resistance and empowerment, *anarch@indigenism* is an important site of critical inquiry to understand and advance the potentiality for agency of collective personhoods.

Embracing the traditions of indigenism, anarchism and feminism, each of the following articles (and this introduction) examines theoretical understandings and practical applications of how post-imperial futures are enacted in the here and now. This co-mingling first began to coalesce in the late spring of 2007 at the Indigenous Leadership Forum (ILF) entitled “Anarcho-Indigenism”, an intensive graduate seminar at the University of Victoria’s Indigenous Governance Program. Taiaiake Alfred first introduces the term ‘anarcho-indigenism’ in his book *Wasàse: indigenous pathways of action and freedom* (2005: 45), and he, along with Glen Coulthard and Richard Day, led seminar participants through invigorating academic and activist explorations. The end of the seminar expanded the term to *anarch@indigenism*, reflecting feminist contributions and crossbreeding. A venture research workshop at the International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention followed in spring 2008 (funded by an ISA grant), bringing together additional diverse scholars to continue the explorations. The contributing authors to this journal issue are drawn from the ILF seminar and the ISA workshop participants. These articles are just a few examples of many insightful and innovative papers that came forth from both ILF and ISA, and hopefully these will only spark further discussions and writings.

Nevzat Soguk’s article “Indigenous Transversality in Global Politics” examines historical transversal politics in indigenous movements in the Americas and beyond, arguing that “contemporary indigenous activism, enacted in multiple political forms, ranging from international governmental organizations to extra-statist indigenous networks, are energized in and through resurgent transversality as a historical spatial condition and a mode of being.” Focusing on the experiences of indigenous peoples’ refusal and ongoing resistance to being ‘absorbed’ by modernity’s nationalizing and territorializing relations, Soguk demonstrates how the different ontology of political being and becoming evident in indigenous practices offers critical and constructive re-envisioning in global political policy and conduct.

In “Against the Law: Indigenous Feminism and the Nation-State,” Andrea Smith illustrates how indigenous feminist activists enact a revolutionary politics “emerging from the nexus of the praxis of indigenous communities (both past and present) as well as the material conditions of heteropatriarchy, colonialism, and white supremacy under which indigenous women live.” In doing so, Smith demonstrates the limits of much of progressive scholarship that rely upon nation-state forms and identity-based politics. Focusing on Native feminist theorizing about nationalism, the nation-state, and sovereignty, Smith argues that a wide variety of theoretical formations are critically transformed in ways that offer needed alternatives to the present U.S. ‘war on terror.’

In another illustration of revolutionary politics that brings together indigenous, anarchist and feminist interventions, Alex Khasnabish's article “Anarch@-Zapatismo: Anti-Capitalism, Anti-Power, and the Insurgent Imagination” demonstrates how the Zapatista indigenous insurgency in Mexico provides a critical space for struggles committed to “anti-authoritarianism, direct action, direct democracy, and an acknowledgement of the irreducible significance of a multiplicity of struggles rather than their subsumption beneath the banner of a single party line.” Focusing on the role of media, Khasnabish further delineates how many in the alter-globalization movement draw inspiration from the Zapatista's practices of direct democracy within their autonomous territories, which are notably outside of state and capitalist logics. Khasnabish argues that this reflects a powerful, insurgent “political imagination”—a “terrain of possibility” and “a space of encounter between diverse groups who do not need to share an identity in order to articulate affinity”—which has achieved transnational resonance.

Making use of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of “becoming minoritarian,” Kathy Ferguson's article “Becoming Anarchism, Feminism, Indigeneity” makes connections among these theories and practices to foreground shared commitments to process, temporality and becoming, over structure, stasis and being among some writers in these philosophies. Such connections are bridges upon which to move forward with (re)new processes for action and novel inventions of meaning. In this philosophical meditation, Ferguson explains how the intersections between anarchism, feminism and indigenism serve as “sites of linkage, or energies that provide for beginnings and endings, link processes to other processes, open relations as well as interrupt them.” Rather than understand these three philosophies as similar to each other or coalescing into a primary reality, Ferguson emphasizes a “mutual becoming” that is necessarily multiple and indeterminate.

In “‘Only a Stranger at Home’: Urban Indigeneity and the Ontopolitics of International Relations,” Jason Adams argues that the intersectionality of anarchism, indigenism and feminism is well-suited as a conceptual tool to the relations of indigeneity and world politics, especially when considered within the framework of “the city” as the contemporary locale of the “frontiers of the state.” Because each of these threads confounds the binaries upon which world politics rely (anarchism for liberty/equality, indigenism for nation/state and feminism for public/private), they powerfully resonate and make possible the paradoxical reimagining of the city as an indigenous space, yet simultaneously a radically pluralistic and egalitarian space. Adams challenges us “to rethink the global city as a space within which contingent encounters might be occurring in ways that are irreducible to the legacy of conquest alone, and which, paradoxically, might even become a venue through which indigenous peoples could begin to achieve a greater degree of cultural autonomy than has so far been possible within a reservation or rural-based enframing precisely because of the coexistent multiplicity that the city entails.”

In “Kuleana Lāhui: Collective responsibility for Hawaiian Nationhood in Activists’ Praxis,” Noelani Goodyear-Kayōpua considers the ways in which Hawaiians enact new relations and forms of social organization in “the spaces beyond or beneath the surface of state-based models of Hawaiian liberation.” Goodyear-Kayōpua displaces the state as the center of political life and instead offers ‘kuleana’ and ‘lāhui’ as indigenous concepts for thinking about and practicing collective autonomy in contemporary Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) social movement organizing. Goodyear-Kayōpua further argues for the development of alliances around anarch@indigenist principles.

First, though, in this introductory article, I will broadly outline an emerging framework for exploring post-imperial futures in a variety of contexts. I begin with a brief overview of the roots of this intersectionality; then I consider the contours of these engagements in building an analytical framework; and finally I briefly examine the praxis evident in contemporary case studies.

What is Anarch@Indigenism?

What is anarch@indigenism, this intersectionality of indigenism, anarchism and feminism? Well, that depends... Anarch@indigenism is different in different places, at different times, as seen by different people. It is relational. It is also plural, multiple, contingent, transient, indeterminate and thoroughly unfixed. Yet it is also grounded. Anarch@indigenism is grounded in the earth, grounded in bodies, grounded in memories (good and bad), and grounded in spirits and dreams. Zapatista Subcomandante Marcos states it well in this self-description:

Marcos is gay in San Francisco, black in South America, an Asian in Europe, a Chicano in San Ysidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, a Mayan Indian in the streets of San Cristobal, a Jew in Germany, a Gypsy in Poland, a Mohawk in Quebec, a pacifist in Bosnia, a single woman on the Metro at 10 p.m., a peasant without land, a gang member in the slums, an unemployed worker, an unhappy student, and, of course, a Zapatista in the mountains.⁵

Marcos is articulating a resistant and resilient agency of the marginalized and subjugated vis-à-vis oppressive power, which transverses places and times. Moreover, this collective personhood of *being-in-relation* is at the crux of any working definition of anarch@indigenism. One's sense of self is not divorced from one's relations with others (known and unknown), relations within systems of power and the embedded struggles of life, relations with the land and natural elements (including spiritual realities), relations with one's histories and genealogies, and relations developed through one's understanding of others' histories and genealogies.⁶

What does this have to do with global politics and transnational relations? Subcomandante Marcos again provides a telling answer: when asked his age he replies "518 years old," making him a child at the time of Christopher Columbus's first 'landing.'⁷ The resistant and resilient agency of anarcha@indigenists, while having a genealogy predating 1492, comes of age in the violences attending European Conquest. International relations as we know it, as a field of theory and practice, also comes of age during these early centuries of modernity. Attempting to make sense of these colonial encounters and imperial violences, western political science has been premised on the 'nation' as a rational and realizable entity. Yet, unimaginable death and irrational devastation in the name of 'nation'—particularly in the form of the state—suggests that this entity is (or should be!) unrealizable. For many reasons that vary in their particularities, the essentialized 'nation' is often an insufficient container in which to place all that is relational, multiple, transient and grounded. So, if the 'nation' is an unrealizable entity, where does that leave us?⁸

What if we focus on the 'relations' and not the 'national' part of international relations? It is, after all, relational tensions that first give rise to colonialism and imperialism. Antony Anghie demonstrates that western international relations, embodied in international law, did not originate in Europe to deal with each other; rather, it was *produced through* initial colonial encounters and ensuing imperial relations between the Spanish and the Indians. He focuses on the works of Francisco de Vitoria, a sixteenth-century Spanish theologian and jurist, who "is an extremely complex figure; a brave champion of Indian rights in his own time,

he may also be seen as an apologist for imperialism whose works are all the more insidious precisely because they justify conquest in terms of humanity and liberality" (Anghie 1999: 103). Anghie argues that the west's fundamental "sovereignty doctrine emerges through [Vitoria's] attempts to address the problem of cultural difference" (90) and the discursive production of a new framework of universal law to deal with the novel problems of encounter between two different cultural systems.⁹ Of course this framework is rooted within Vitoria's Spanish cultural norms, and:

[o]nce this framework is established, [Vitoria] demonstrates that the Indians are in violation of universal natural law. Indians are included within the system only to be disciplined. [Moreover, his concepts and arguments] are still regularly employed in contemporary international relations in the supposedly postimperial world (102).

The point here is that relations of conquest—European justifications for extinguishing 'Other'/Native cultures—are embryonic to the development of traditional imaginings of western political science. Therefore we must contend with these imperial pasts and presents as we explore post-imperial futures.

In *Indian-Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*, Jack Weatherford documents how the innumerable contributions of the Native peoples of 'New World' were appropriated by the 'Old World,' all the while they were being killed and subjugated in the course of this appropriation:

The most consistent theme in the descriptions penned about the New World was amazement at the Indians' personal liberty, in particular their freedom from rulers and from social classes based on ownership of property. For the first time the French and the British became aware of the possibility of living in social harmony and prosperity without the rule of a king (Weatherford 1988: 121-2).

'Enlightened' writers such as Sir Thomas Moore, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Benjamin Franklin and others were all heavily indebted to Native sociopolitical practices in the Americas, which embodied freedom, liberty, reciprocity and egalitarianism unfamiliar to Europeans. French ethnographer, (Louis Armand de Lom d'Arce) Baron de Lahontan, in "describ[ing] this political situation, revived the Greek-derived word 'anarchy,' using it in the literal sense meaning 'no ruler.' Lahontan found an orderly society but one lacking a formal government that compelled such order" (Weatherford 1988: 123).¹⁰ Instead of notions of private property, and all its attendant vices (accumulation, exploitation, etc.), indigenous practices were based upon personal autonomy and collective use

of resources (Arthur 2007). Nonhierarchical relations were the norm, wherein authority was not exercised through force (be it parental authority over children or chiefly authority over the people) but through exemplary conduct, oratory skill, and according to traditional protocols (Alfred 1999; Barsh 1986; Deloria and Lytle 1984 [1998]; Sioui 1992). Taiaiake Alfred elaborates:

Collective self-determination depends on the conscious coordination of individual powers of self-determination. The governance process consists in the structured interplay of three kinds of power: individual power, persuasive power, and the power of tradition. These power relations are channeled into forms of decision-making and dispute resolution grounded in the recognition that beyond the individual there exists a natural community of interest: the extended family. Thus in almost all indigenous cultures, the foundational order of government is the clan. And almost all indigenous systems are predicated on a collective decision-making process organized around the clan (1999: 26).

Within these indigenous societies, this 'anarchy' was particularly acute concerning the parity between men and women (in public and in private), the openness and diversity of sexuality, and the liberties enjoyed by all genders (Allen 1986; Jacobs 1999; Kame'eleihiwa 1992). These are some of the roots of anarch@indigenism.

To the Europeans, these indigenous practices were not only bewildering but also highly contentious in being almost diametrical opposite to European societies. Within the indigenous world view, coexistence among different groups was not only *not contentious* but it was often desirable, and Native practices of treaty making attest to indigenous willingness and ability to live and thrive amid differences (Alfred 2005; Williams 1997). Just as in familial and communal lives, the indigenous anarchist norm of not imposing one's will upon another through force was the basis of national and international relations (Arthur 2007).¹¹

European authorities were particularly alarmed with the appeal of this alternative (better) Native way of living and governing as opposed to their own oppressive hierarchies and authoritarian practices (Sioui 1992; Stannard 1992; Wronne and Nelson 1982). During the early colonial encounters many Europeans, especially white women, chose to live among the Indians, presumably because it was a preferred to colonial life and European norms (Namias 1993; Rowlandson 1974; Seavers 1975). In this context, indigenous 'anarchy' was construed as a threat, and quelling this threat became, in part, the impetus for international relations of European imperialism and violent colonialism. The other part, of course, was/is the insidious and insatiable expedience of capitalist

expansion in land and labor (Wallerstein 1974). To put it simply, the two go hand in hand: a capitalist world-system requires oppressive hierarchies to discipline peoples and places.

In this way the function of colonial imperialism “was not to force the indigenes to become Europeans, but to keep Europeans from becoming indigenes.”¹² Andrea Smith demonstrates that this was done through “the demonization of Native women...as a strategy of white men to maintain control over white women” (2005: 21). She explains:

In order to colonize a people whose society was not hierarchical, colonizers must first naturalize hierarchy through instituting patriarchy. Patriarchal gender violence is the process by which colonizers inscribe hierarchy and domination on the bodies of the colonized (Smith 2005: 23).

The rape of Native women parallels the rape of Native lands (McClintock 1995); legitimizing the former authorizes the latter. This further produces intersecting hierarchies of race and gender within the imperial project (Stoler 1995), which is further intersected by hierarchies of class therein. Not only does the restriction of women's (and children's) freedoms and liberties through the institutionalization of the patriarchal nuclear family parallel the denial of freedom and liberties within patriarchal European and colonial societies at large (Merry 2000), it also produces a necessary unit of consumption within a capitalist political economy.

The interlocking projects of capitalism, colonialism/imperialism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy racism functioned (and continue to function now) as means of outward expansion in the colonies (now: the global South) and inward consolidation of the nascent European nation-states (now: the global North, especially America).¹³ In these incipient formulations of international relations, there is no foreign-domestic distinction, no public-private divide. Suppressing the anarchism and feminism within indigenism has been and continues to be a paramount preoccupation of western political theory and practice. Therefore, as we work towards post-imperial futures a natural starting point (again) is within the intersectionality of feminism, anarchism and indigenism, and the (re)constitution of (old)new *relations* embodying nonhierarchy, liberty, collective decision-making, multiple and decentralized authorities, egalitarianism, reciprocity and freedom.

Anarchism, Indigenism, Feminism

In *Wasàse: indigenous pathways of action and freedom*, Taiaiake Alfred talks with a range of indigenous leaders of Turtle Island (“North America”) to understand various communities’ struggles, sociopolitical strategies, and roads

not taken. He argues for a renewed ethics of courage “to restore connections severed by the colonial machine” through “an integrated personality, a cohesive community, and the restoration of respectful and harmonious relationships” (2005: 45). Moreover:

[t]ranslating this ethical sense and idea on a way of being into a concise political philosophy is difficult, for it resists institutionalization. I might suggest, as a starting point, conceptualizing *anarcho-indigenism*. Why? And why this term? ... How might this spirit [of an indigenous warrior ethic] be described in contemporary terms relating to political thought and movement? The two elements that come to mind are *indigenous*, evoking cultural and spiritual rootedness in this land and the Onkwehonwe [“*original people*”] struggle for justice and freedom, and the political philosophy and movement that is fundamentally anti-institutional, radically democratic, and committed to taking action to force change: *anarchism* (Ibid).

In addition to noting some parallel critical ideas of the spirit of freedom and ideals of a good society, Alfred outlines:

[i]mportant strategic commonalities between indigenous and anarchist ways of seeing and being in the world: a rejection of alliances with legalized systems of oppression, non-participation in the institutions that structure the colonial relationship, and a belief in bringing about change through direct action, physical resistance, and confrontations with state power (2005: 46).

Many alliances being forged today lend evidence to this last point, especially in specific anti-colonial actions (Day 2001; Day and Haberle 2006) and in the broader counter-globalization movement (Bey 1994; Big Noise 2005; Mertes 2004). These experiences of solidarity inform and are informed by the linking conceptualization of indigenism and anarchism. Successful alliance building and actions are very difficult as non-indigenous anarchists must contend with their own imperial histories and colonial genealogies, and the negotiation of these relations is highly contingent on specific struggles and the people involved. Nevertheless, with these renewed ethical commitments and strategic commonalities it appears possible and preferable to (re)create relations that sustain differences, rather than try to deny or eliminate them.¹⁴

Alfred contends that oftentimes indigenous and anarchist groups are confronted with the same repressive extremes of the state. However, he argues against violent means for several reasons: 1) violent means tend to reproduce

violent structures, particularly in terms of gendered relations; 2) the elusiveness of contemporary oppressions makes violence increasingly futile, and 3) transformation begins with one's own cultural and political conscious and subconscious (2005: 55-61). Accordingly, in speaking about indigenism, anarchism and the state, Ward Churchill (2005) suggests:

[1] what you need is the ability to cause an increasing number of people to withdraw consent from some key sectors that keep the system functioning... [2] you also have to create counter-models that people can look at, that they can be attracted to... that leads to withdrawal, and creates doubt as to the inevitability of state structures... [3] remove service sectors of responsibility from the state, and place them in the hands of the community... [and 4] you need to build the consciousness, you have to build the psychology, you have to build the experiential base, and you have to build the theoretical base.

For Churchill, the political affinity between indigenous and anarchist activists is not surprising, because "indigenism is an ancestor to anarchism" and the contemporary alliances being forged reflect anarchist elements in indigenous struggles for over 500 years.

Aragorn! (2005) offers some philosophical principles evident in these political efforts "to establish a way to live that is both indigenous [that is] of the land that we are actually on, and anarchist [that is] without authoritarian constraint:

[1] everything is alive...imbibed with spirit... [2] nothing is an object [as all experiences are full of] complexity, dynamism, and intrinsic worth... [3, there is an] ascendance of memory [and the sharing and experiencing of memories]... [4] an indigenous anarchism is an anarchism of place [wherein choices are] dictated by the subjective experience of those living in place and not the exigency of economic or political priorities... [and 5, this all] places us as an irremovable part of an extended family [because] it is impossible to understand oneself or one another outside of the spirit.

These principles are aligned with what Subcomandante Marcos articulates as an anarch@indigenist collective personhood of *being-in-relation*. Moreover, these thoughts and practices resonate throughout various global contexts. As Marcos indicates in his age, "518," and Alfred and Churchill concur, conceptions of anarch@indigenism predate, while still 'coming of age' amid, European Conquest.

Another strand of indigenous anarchism (or anarchist indigenism) can be teased out from within the blurred boundaries of 'the West and the Rest'¹⁵ and the intertwined histories and genealogies of anarchist internationalism and radical anti-colonialism during the late-19th and early-20th centuries, what Benedict Anderson (2005) considers to be the shared legacy of today's counter-globalization movement, and which resonates with earlier forms of indigenous anarchism. In dispelling aspects of Eurocentrism in anarchist philosophy and political traditions, numerous authors document the cross-fertilization and interconnectedness of anarchism as an international movement from its modern onset (Adams 2003; Antliff 2004; Apter and Joll 1971; Dirlik 1993; Fernandez 2001; Graham 2005). The valuable contributions of the 'founding fathers' of western anarchism—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Michael Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and others—cannot be discounted; they provided an incisive critique of capitalism and liberalism (and sometimes patriarchy, as in the case of Bakunin) *from within* European societies.¹⁶ On the contrary, the works of these western anarchists were often appropriated (or reappropriated)¹⁷ and refashioned by nonwestern theorists and practitioners, using anarchism as a tool (or weapon) to critique European colonialism and imperialism *from without*. Again, the 'relations' part of international relations is obvious. Jason Adams (2003) explains:

[A]narchism, in the first quarter of the 20th century, was the largest antisystemic movement in almost *all* parts of the world, ...[and it] actually claimed the greatest number of adherents outside of the West rather than within it as well. ... [T]he temptation to systematize and essentialize global social movements in order to make them easier to digest is one that should be undertaken with great care and discrimination; indeed, often it is a step that should not be undertaken at all. The reason is that one cannot ever fully understand the nuance and complexity of the thousands of social movements that have pulsed through nonwestern societies through the lens of any singular overarching theory; even seemingly small factors of social difference can render them worthless.

In detailing its many historical manifestations, Adams argues that "anarchism has *always* been a decentered and diverse tradition" and a counter-hegemonic force in world politics.

Richard J.F. Day (2005) further demonstrates that contemporary manifestations of anarchist currents are evident in the newest social movements, which importantly reflect a growing anti-hegemonic force in the global landscape. In striving to make the state (and its corresponding political economies) redundant, rather than replacing the 'rulers' of the state with their own, these movements, and especially its indigenous variants, engage in direct actions that

construct alternative forms of governance and ways of *being-in-relation*. For Day, anarch@indigenist conceptions are significantly embodied in the Two Row Wampum treaty model:

In traveling the same rivers together, indigenous and non-indigenous peoples must be aware of their shared reliance upon the land and upon each other. But, in refraining from attempts to steer the other's vessel, each acknowledges the other's right to maintain its particularity and difference (Day 2005: 194).

This model is neither integrationist nor separatist; instead it offers spaces for respectful coexistences.¹⁸ Day argues that this sort of affinity politics enables solidarities that are ever-flexible and relational, with resilient and resistant intersubjectivities produced and reproduced therein.¹⁹

Additionally, within these interwoven international strands of indigenism and anarchism, feminist *means* are evidenced in enactment of egalitarian gender relations in some of these movements (Graham 2005). Feminist anarchists have taken this further by directly challenging male anarchists and/or indigenists to contend with their own sexism, and also challenging women's movements to be more decentralized and egalitarian in their decision-making processes (Collective 2002; Freeman and Levine 1984; Goldman 1979; Kornegger 1981; Wildflower 2005). Moreover indigenist feminists offer astute analyses along multiple axis of oppression and urge actions that develop holistic strategies to end violence and promote freedom (Ainger 2002; Galindo 2008; Smith 2005). This is particularly vital for decolonization movements, because it is *through* gender violence that Native national sovereignties were/are subjugated; therefore gender justice must be at the center of analyses and actions. Andrea Smith explains: "If we maintain these [violently imposed] patriarchal gender systems, we will be unable to decolonize and fully assert our sovereignty" (2005: 139). She urges those who seek to end the violences of global capitalism, colonialism/imperialism, white supremacist racism, and hetero-patriarchy to "look to alternative visions of governance articulated by Native women activists that do not depend on domination and force but rely on systems of kinship, respect, and reciprocity" (6). Importantly, Native women activists are articulating notions of 'nation' and 'sovereignty' detached from state forms and predicated upon interrelatedness and mutual responsibilities (186):

The project of creating a new world governed by an alternative system not based on domination, coercion, and control, does not depend on an unrealistic goal of being able to fully describe a utopian society for all at this point in time. ...Nevertheless, we can

be a part of a collective, creative process that can bring us closer to a society not based on domination (Smith 2005: 191).

To summarize in my own words, the contours of these contemporary engagements of indigenism, anarchism and feminism provide an emerging framework in which to explore post-imperial futures in global politics. First, the *means* of sociopolitical change *are the ends*.²⁰ In other words, the formations of struggle are equally important to its functions. Accordingly, within an anarch@indigenist framework it is necessary to break down patriarchy and gender violence within families and communities *concurrent* with decolonization and anti-imperialist struggles around the world; it is necessary to *practice* collective decision-making *within* non-hierarchical organizations; it is necessary to decentralize authority internally *while* challenging centralized authority externally.

Second, in order for the means to be consonant with the ends, non-participation vis-à-vis oppressive institutions is required, and instead, direct action should prioritize (re)creating preferred governance systems and renewed ethical interpersonal/intercommunal/international *relationships*. So much creative energy is drained from indigenous peoples and social justice groups because they pursue accommodationist and reformist strategies within oppressive systems, which often undermine their recuperative/progressive/radical potentiality in the long run and reinscribes them as subjects in these systems.²¹ Instead, anarch@indigenist strategies invest resources into *being differently now* according to the *lived experiences* of and needs for collective personhood.

Third, anarch@indigenism embodies processes of re-connection to traditions as sources of strength, guidance and resurgence. Far from static rituals from a bygone era, indigenous traditions are vibrant and dynamic, as their oral histories demonstrate, and they reflect cultural wisdom and spiritual knowledge to *engage* sociopolitical change.²² Moreover, processes of re-connection to indigenous traditions effectively shift the frame of reference in de-legitimizing the all-encompassing colonial/imperial narrative of inevitability and 'Progress,'²³ thereby empowering old/new ways of *being-in-relation*.

Finally, the traditional relational emphasis of anarch@indigenism prioritizes locality while simultaneously linking with globality. This epistemological grounding *works through* and *lives with* differences within non-coercive regimes of respect, responsibility and reciprocity. The contingency, multiplicity and plurality of living and being are embraced, while rejecting impositions of singularity or universality. Again, Zapatista Subcomandante Marcos aptly describes this intersectionality of indigenism, feminism and anarchism: "One world with many worlds in it."²⁴

This is not just a theory...

There are several contemporary case-studies that exemplify anarch@indigenist ways of being, and that enact post-imperial futures through direct action, thereby producing and reproducing increasingly empowered intersubjectivities in the present. The most well-known is probably the Zapatista movement in the Chiapas region of southern Mexico. The quotes of Marcos used in this paper reflect the themes, practices and possibilities of *being* and *doing* anarch@indigenism (in pasts, presents and futures). What is noteworthy, argues Todd May, is that:

[r]ather than taking on the indigenous struggle as a struggle of specifically indigenous people, instead the Zapatistas have taken on indigenous struggle because of the *equality* of indigenous people. It is this approach that has allowed them to remain at once rooted in local customs and capable of addressing issues that concern everyone on the planet, such as the effects of neoliberalism (May 2008: 6).

In other words, what they are doing is not a form of identity politics but, instead, a practice of equality. Moreover, the Zapatistas carved out and sustained autonomous zones for their decentralized egalitarian practices of collective personhood within the Mexican state, and these practices continue to be imbued with an almost organic cross-fertilization dynamic, spreading to and from other local movements throughout the globe. Other case-studies for future research within an anarch@indigenist framework might include the White Earth Land Recovery Project in Minneapolis (White Earth), INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (INCITE!), governance practices in Porto Alegre, Brazil (Bruce 2005), the Poor Peoples Movement in Thailand (Missingham 2004), and many more that I'm not even aware of. Several projects and papers are currently underway that will surely contribute to this emerging analytical and practical framework.²⁵ Here I will briefly examine the praxis evident in two additional sites of anarch@indigenist struggles: the group Mujeres Creando ("Women Creating") in Bolivia and the community taro patches of Hawai'i. I also discuss how that the still-inconclusive Egyptian revolution of 2011 showed significant traces of anarch@indigenism in Tahrir ("*Liberation*") Square and throughout local neighborhoods.

Mujeres Creando is a group of women who self-consciously link indigenism, feminism and anarchism in their direct action practices to confront the Bolivian state, heteropatriarchy and the neoliberal order. Since 1992, they have utilized diversity and creativity in their incessant public art,²⁶ educational workshops, Indymedia productions, mass occupation of private banks, various spontaneous

and planned actions with allies, incisive critiques of the Left and Right, insistently visible and vocal non-participation in the electoral process, performativity and powerful presences on urban streets that are simultaneously disruptive and welcoming (MujeresCreando). In their own words:

Mujeres Creando is made up of lesbians and heterosexuals, whites and indigenous women, young and old women, divorced and married women, women from the country and from the city, etc. The system tries to keep us in the 'enclosed cubicles' and to divide us so that it can control us more effectively. ... In the process of constructing organization—no bosses, not hierarchy—I speak for myself and don't represent anybody. I've said it [before] and I'll say it again that we're not anarchists by Bakunin or the CNT, but rather by our grandmothers, and that's a beautiful school of anarchism. ... We're interested in the daily construction of practice and theory in the streets and in nurturing our creativity (Collective 2002: 111-2).

They are re-creating relations based upon their traditions and their preferred futures in the urban landscapes of their lives, while still fostering relations with those in the rural countryside and taking actions in solidarity. These anarch@indigenists are living differently with each other in ways that confront authority figures in their lives, such as in the state, church, and family, thereby compelling different sociopolitical interactions.

Of particular significance is Mujeres Creando's critique of Bolivian President Evo Morales, the first indigenous head of state.²⁷ Morales is highly regarded by many in Bolivia, Latin America and throughout the world for prioritizing the rights of indigenous people in the state, for enacting policies that contribute to the needs of indigenous farmers, for confronting multinational corporations and renegotiating terms of resource use to retain more profit within the country to expand social programs, and for many other radically progressive actions prior to and since assuming office. In this context, the critique levied against Morales by Mujeres Creando is curious:

In Bolivia there are hundreds of thousands of Evos, in each public high school, on each neighborhood soccer team, in each little workers union, from the taxi drivers to the ice cream vendors. There are intuitive Evos, with beautifully dark complexions, casual and unorthodox in terms of cultural identity. They are Evos as modern as they are indigenous but, above all audacious in their use of words and careless and macho in sex and love. They use ponchos, suits or sports jackets and they choose their clothes with the liberty that

patriarchal societies prohibit women, and above all those that are called 'indigenous' and who, for that reason, have to carry their cultural identity on their hips and backs, undrawing their curves in the use of masculine mandates (Galindo 2008).

Maria Galindo, in an article posted on the Mujeres Creando website, explains that President Morales's proposed changes to the Bolivian Constitution in the form of a constitutional assembly will in effect forcefully re-inscribe patriarchal and neoliberal boundaries upon the peoples and movements that put him in office in the first place. Among other reasons, this is because the assembly will "close all possibility of direct representation of social movements," "ratify the technocratic neoliberal criteria of representation of women as a biological quota within political parties," and "leaves out the important sectors of 'neoliberal exiles' who are a migrant population in countries like Argentina, Brazil, U.S. and Spain" (Ibid). Furthermore, "in this way, the magical Evo, the Evo who wakes up identities, can convert himself into an identitive antidote that inaugurates a regime closed around its leaders." (Ouch!)

Their critique of President Evo Morales is not one of mere differences of opinion or public policy; on the contrary, Mujeres Creando relentlessly holds him accountable for what he does while taking him to task on the *means* he proposes that effectively undermine the *ends* that he professes. They remind Morales that he is only in this position of power because of the masses of peoples in movements, and that now he will effectively be muting their voices for the sake of structural expediency. In their capacious analysis, Mujeres Creando link all of this to the inherent corruptibility of state structures and to the inherent oppressiveness of heteropatriarchy that permeates societies. Moreover, they shrewdly interrogate the 'indigenous' signification of Morales and its hegemonic potentiality, which Mujeres Creando rejects:

[L]ooking at 'supposedly' original cultures is not the mechanism that will permit us to decolonize our society, nor make it fuller, more livable or freer. The demand for 'the original culture' as pure, as the culture that will build the nation, the project of power and then nationalism will only drive us to the patriarchal and colonial renovation of power, where power simply exercises power with a mere change of character. ... Our society is not a society of pure, original, indigenous people versus undesirable mestizo white-oids. It is much more complex than that; ours is a society of disobediences and cultural mutations... It is a society like all societies of the world where we as social actors also construct culture... We are not 'obedient originals' and for that reason and because we put in

question cultural mandates, starting with clothing and ending with pleasures. Due to and thanks to this disobedience which makes us happy, we propose a decolonizing and depatriarchalizing society project that has the rise of nationalisms as a principle question' (Ibid).²⁸

In other words, they force an interrogation of indigeneity, especially when in forms of state power, through the deployment of feminist and anarchist sensibilities. In these myriad and hybrid ways, the works of Mujeres Creando reflect a praxis of the intersectionality of indigenism, anarchism and feminism.

Additionally, I suggest that the contemporary taro farming movement in Hawai'i can be analyzed in terms of an anarch@indigenist site of struggle.²⁹ Rather than impose this emerging framework on to the lo'i (*"taro patch"*), I consider the convergences and divergences of the community taro patches with the themes and engagements discussed in this introductory article. In Hawai'i, and specifically the locale of Wai'āhole valley on windward O'ahu where the first 'modern' community taro patch was rehabilitated upon ancient lo'i,³⁰ the 'community' taro patch has multiple referents: 1) a community taro patch for and within the local community; 2) a community taro patch located within a specific locale but for the broader taro farming community across the islands; and 3) a community taro patch in the traditional Hawaiian ahupua'a (*"valley land division"*) system of shared subsistence and sustenance with collective resource management (significantly unhinged in time and space).

The indigenous and settler taro farmers of Kalo Pa'ā o Wai'āhole (*"Hard Taro of Wai'āhole"*)³¹ organized in 1995 to rehabilitate an ancient taro patch they call the Mauka Lo'i (*"mountainside taro patch"*). They literally occupied state land designated as 'open space,' creating a communal taro patch open to all people who want to simply be in the lo'i.³² This is aligned with anarch@indigenism in taking direct action that creates viable alternatives in the *here and now*, investing resources into *lived experiences* of and needs for an indigenous centered collective personhood. Moreover, the 'ōhana (*"extended family network"*),³³ and not the individual nor the nuclear family, is the primary mode of organizing, and this is inclusive of non-blood relatives and non-indigenous peoples.³⁴ Kalo Pa'ā also helped form a decentralized islands-wide network in 1998, Onipa'ā Nā Hui Kalo (*"steadfast association of taro"*), to support taro farmers in various locales to rehabilitate ancient lo'i and to re-create Hawaiian politico-economic practices and socio-cultural-ecosystem relationships. These re-connections to tradition are irreducible to an essentialized indigenous identity; rather, they empower old/new ways of *being-in-relation*, full of multiplicity, plurality and 'play' within contemporary contexts.³⁵ This, too, is in convergence with anarch@indigenism.

For several decades the taro farmers of Kalo Paʻya and Onipaʻya Kalo have confronted the exploitative resource uses—the literal taking of water out of streams that are the lifeblood of the loʻi—by governments (state and national, including the U.S. military), private businesses³⁶ and multinational corporations. The form of this confrontation has been in litigation at the state Water Commission and State of Hawaiʻi Supreme Court, which is a seeming divergence from the anarch@indigenist framework of non-participation. Nevertheless, Kalo Paʻya and their allies have been successful in codifying water rights for taro and its traditional cultivation in ways that chip away at the authority of the colonial capitalist system (and by providing legal ‘tools’ for others to chip away at ‘the system’ as well). They seemingly render the neoliberal order redundant to the extent that they ignore ‘no trespassing’ signs as they occupy state lands for indigenous Hawaiʻian uses, take back resources previously monopolized by colonial powers for traditional uses, recreate their own material and cultural economies that withdraw their consent for and dependency on consumer capitalist culture, and articulate a consciousness of themselves rooted within renewed indigenist intersubjectivities. The effectiveness of this double-edged approach of engagement and disengagement with the state is debatable and requires further research and analysis. My point is that the loʻi is a fruitful site for further investigation as an anarch@indigenist struggle. The Hawaiʻian sovereignty movement in general also exemplifies anarch@indigenist ways of being and doing (Goodyear-Kaʻopua 2008). As this emerging framework for the intersectionality of indigenism, anarchism, and feminism takes shape, the praxis of innumerable case-studies will inform its theoretical utility.

Further traces of anarch@indigenism are evident in the recent democratic uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, especially in Egypt. While the roots of the Egyptian revolution stem from years of trade union and youth activism, the nearly-spontaneous mass demonstrations in Tahrir Square in January-February 2011 were an unprecedented form of direct action.³⁷ Within the space of the ‘Liberation Square’ and beyond, Egyptians of all ages and from all religious, occupational, ethnic and regional backgrounds were not only protesting against the despotic political regime they sought to overthrow, but they were also enacting the social relations that they sought to (re)create. Rather than the ‘anarchy’ of violence and looting often feared from the absence of state authority and amid widespread political unrest, Egyptians exhibited significant forms of indigenous anarchism in the following ways: forming security checkpoints and neighborhood patrols to ensure collective safety against state-sponsored violence; feeding, sheltering and providing healthcare to each other as needed on an ongoing basis; abstaining from sexual harassment and fostering a climate of gender and sexual respect and mutual responsibility; and engaging in productive social and political dialogues

and debates.³⁸ All the while, there was no 'one' leader or leading political party that imposed 'order' on the masses of people participating in democratic direct action that ultimately overthrew the despotic regime of President Hosni Mubarak. While the long-term results of the Egyptian revolution are indeterminate as political transition and social transformation are ongoing, these profound events demonstrate how the positive cross-breeding of anarchism, indigenism and feminism may be practiced 'on the ground' or 'in the streets.'

Anarch@Indigenist Futures?

What does the global political landscape look like when we put the experiences and needs of indigenous people at the center of analysis, when we foreground feminist theorizing, and we incorporate anarchist practices? This becomes one of the driving questions for a research agenda within this emerging framework of anarch@indigenism. What appears to me is that radical/progressive sociopolitical change is possible: not by overthrowing the entire 'system,' but by changing our *relations* to it, by changing the way we interact with its various manifestations, and thereby changing our relations and interactions with each other.

When Marx speaks of commodity fetishism, it isn't simply that one/all come to worship the commodity above everything (which is indeed part of it); more problematic is that commodities *replace relations* in our interactions with each other. So instead of relating to each other directly, we mediate that relatedness through commodities (e.g. buying gifts, eating at restaurants, accounting of things, etc.). Following upon Marx (perhaps inappropriately), the overbearing weight of the interlocking projects of global capitalism, heteropatriarchy, and white supremacy racism can be similarly fetishized if they become the only reference points for our subjective positions, our sociopolitical actions and our relations therein.³⁹ For example, many peoples and groups seek redress *through* this 'system' in the form of the nation-state or international regimes, thereby inadvertently re-inscribing themselves as *subjects* of these oppressive systems. Others seek to overturn the system utilizing oppressive (singular) metanarratives or violent means, which also inadvertently reconstitutes violent structures and oppressive discourses, thereby narrowing their subjective maneuverability. Anarch@indigenist research agendas and socio-political actions focus on those peoples and groups that do not fall into such traps, and instead relate differently to each other and 'the system' in their direct strategies of the here and now.

The emerging framework of anarch@indigenism reveals the potential for directly relating to each other and changing our relationships with each other in ways that withdraw consent from 'the system' and re-creates alternatives that empower our collective personhoods *now*. What indigenist-anarchists-feminists

are doing is prefiguring a more just and peaceful world. The privileged place upon which we, as scholars, stand and speak must be informed by what is already taking place 'on the ground.'⁴⁰ In our analyses and in our actions, by privileging what has been violently subordinated—specifically the anarchism and feminism within indigenism that has and continues to be suppressed—we may better learn to embrace the multiplicity, plurality, contingency and indeterminacy therein, thus contributing to post-imperial futures of *being-in-relation* in the here and now.

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Endnotes

¹ I am indebted to Taiaiake Alfred, Richard Day and Glen Coulthard who led the “Anarcho-Indigenism” week-long intensive graduate seminar as part of the Indigenous Leadership forum at the University of Victoria’s Indigenous Governance Program on May 28—June 1, 2007. The breadth of their intellectual

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³ These traditions are diverse, and at times contradictory, and I do not pretend to be comprehensive in my engagement with them. Nevertheless, for sake of clarification, when I use the term indigenism I also consider allied postcolonial and critical race theorists/practitioners, with the term anarchism I also incorporate socialist variants and avoid the purely libertarian strands, and within the term feminism I also include radical and queer theorists/practitioners.

⁴ ‘Unsettling’ here has a double connotation: to disrupt the order and make one feel ill at ease; and also to literally un-settle settler colonial states, which doesn’t necessarily equate to physical relocation (although it can) but the diminishment of settler authority in states and the indigenizing of state forms.

⁵ McRuer 2003.

⁶ See Winona LaDuke’s influential *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (1999) among many other Native authors who articulate the Native ways of *being-in-relation*.

⁷ Mertes 2004: 8.

⁸ This question was posed by Mathias Pandian at a University of Hawai’i Political Science Department colloquium on March 7, 2008.

⁹ See also Barker (2005) and Bartelson (1995) for critical engagements of sovereignty.

¹⁰ It’s important to note that despite the common conflation of anarchy with anarchism, in modern western political thought anarchist traditions have rarely concerned disorder and instead overwhelmingly focus upon decentralizing authority through non-oppressive governance (Graham 2005). In this vein, much of anarchist critique and action has been directed against the state, as the dominant centralized, oppressive governing authority. Todd May explains: “To

the anarchists, political representation signifies the delegation of power from one group or individual to another, and with that delegation comes the risk of exploitation by the group or individual to whom power has been ceded. It is a mistake to view the anarchist diatribes against the state as the foundation for its critique of representation. The state is the object of critique because it is the ultimate form of political representation, not because it is founding for it" (1994: 47).

¹¹ This is not to deny that force was used in these varying levels of societal relations, but it was not the norm.

¹² Quoted in Smith (2005: 18), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam *Unthinking Eurocentric* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹³ Andrea Smith urges: "We must recognize that the consolidation of U.S. empire abroad through the never-ending 'war on terror' is inextricably linked to U.S. attacks on Native sovereignty within U.S. borders" (2005: 6).

¹⁴ Alfred (1999) provides a compelling argument for indigenous treaty making practices as a working model for international relations of differential coexistence.

¹⁵ This is a phrase popularized by Stuart Hall.

¹⁶ While anarchist critiques of capitalism and liberalism initially converged with socialist and Marxist critiques, they also diverged in important ways. See May (1994) and Day (2005) for a discussions of historical divergences and contemporary implications of Marxism and anarchism.

¹⁷ As has been previously discussed, it is likely there are/were myriad anarchisms throughout indigenous/nonwestern societies, the specific manifestations of which would, of course, vary greatly, and the contexts in which they were/are reasserted also vary greatly. This is perhaps most notably evidenced in the works of Mahatmas Gandhi and his practices of self-sufficiency and non-cooperation (Gandhi 2002).

¹⁸ See also Williams (1997) for a discussion of Native treaties as constitutive of national and international relations.

¹⁹ Richard Day explains: "Living affinity-based relationships means not only hooking up with those with whom we share values, but actively warding off and working against those whose practices perpetuate division, domination and exploitation. ... This is the crux of the task of building the coming communities: we must develop – and live according to – shared ethico-political commitments that allow us to achieve enough solidarity to effectively create sustainable alternatives to the neoliberal order" (2005: 186).

²⁰ See also Agamben (2000) for an erudite discussion of politics of *means without ends*.

²¹ See Adams (1989) for an insightful discussion on “the failure of native leadership,” and also Marule (1985) and Trask (1993).

²² See Gegeo (2001) for an interesting discussion on cultural rupture and indigeneity, and also Hauyofa (1993) for a seminal discussion on re-connecting pan-indigenous traditions.

²³ See Alfred and Corntassel (2005) for a discussion of colonialism as myth.

²⁴ Mertes (2004: 229).

²⁵ Forthcoming articles based on papers presented at the International Studies Association (ISA) venture research grant workshop “Post Imperial Futures: Anarchism, Indigenism and Feminism in Critical *International Relations Theory and Praxis*” on March 25, 2008, and at the ISA Convention panel “Anarcha-Indigenism: a Bridge Across Multiple Divides?” on March 26, 2008.

²⁶ “We believe that how we relate to people in the street is the most important thing. ... We paint graffiti – las pintadas – this is one of the communicative forms that really gets through to people. ... Examples include ‘Making your supper and your bed takes away my desire to make love to you’, ‘If Goni [former President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada] had a womb, he’d legalize abortion and privatize it’, and ‘Neither God, nor master, nor husband, nor party’ (Ainger 2002: 107).

²⁷ Some former presidents had mixed indigenous heritage, as is the case with many people in Latin America, but due to their life experiences, affinity practices, etc. they did not identify as indigenous and they were not identified by others as indigenous.

²⁸ Galindo (2008) adds: “As feminists we want to be neither underneath nor on top of anyone. That is why we will not find our own place in this process. As quasi undesirable tenants of the candidacy that we postulate, we use this space to affirm that the decolonization of the State is not possible without its depatriarchalization. ... They want to substituted the project of the united Nation State for a project of autonomous plurinationalisms in order to open an eternal struggle for land, for resources, for power and control. We want to be neither on top nor underneath and so we challenge this project with our body and our skin, sensitive and open to sin.”

²⁹ See Lasky (2008a) for a thorough discussion of this case-study. The taro plant, an elder sibling of the Hawaiian people, was the ‘staff of life’ in traditional society. The primacy of taro cultivation integrated Hawaiian culture, economics and governance and imbued these social relations with spiritual meaning (Handy et al 1972). Taro has been continually cultivated in Hawai‘i since time immemorial; however, in the past several decades there has been renewed interest in taro cultivation and it has come to symbolize social and political pursuits of renewing Hawaiian sovereignties.

³⁰ Waiāhole and Waikāne valleys are the site of field research for my dissertation. Although this is only one locale, it is nonetheless emblematic of other locales similarly situated or those who share political affinities throughout the islands.

³¹ The name of this taro farming group is derived from a traditional story of the place: “Ke kalo pa‘a o Waiāhole: The hard taro of Waiāhole. A reminder to not treat others badly. One day a man went to Waiāhole, O‘ahu, to visit his sister whom he had not seen for many years. She was absent, and her husband neither asked the stranger in nor offered him any food. When hunger possessed the visitor he asked if he might have some taro to eat. His brother-in-law directed him to his taro patches and told him to get some from there. The man went to the patches and then continued on his way. When the woman returned she was told of the visitor, and by her husband’s description she knew that it was her brother. She rebuked him for his lack of hospitality. When they went to their taro patches they found all the taro pulled up and hacked to pieces” (Pukui 1983). Another version of the story is that all the taro was burned: ‘the taro of Waiāhole is so hard that it burns.’

³² The Mauka Lo‘i was closed in the summer of 2007 due to intracommunity conflict within Waiāhole. See Lasky (2008b) for a brief discussion of the related contentious issues, which will be discussed at length in my forthcoming dissertation.

³³ The word *‘ōhona* comes from the word for taro offshoot, *‘ōha*, reflecting taro’s centrality in Hawaiian epistemology and cosmology. In the Kumulipo genealogy of the Hawaiian people, the first son of the mating gods was a stillborn malformed child who was buried, and from this sacred ground sprouted a taro plant; the second child of these gods was human beings. Taro is the elder sibling of the Hawaiian people, and in this way they are interconnected with each other and with the gods and their natural environment.

³⁴ This sense of extended family networks inclusive of non-blood relatives is best described in this Hawaiian proverb or poetic saying: “Pili ‘ōhā, he kāmau mai mawaho: A taro-offshoot relationship added to the outside of the corm. Said of one who is not a relative, yet is a member of the household” (Pukui 1983).

³⁵ Citing 19th-century Hawaiian historian Kepelino, Noelani Arista (2007) explores this concept of ‘Hawai‘i imi loa.’ As part of a forthcoming dissertation I explore how the *lo‘i* harkens the decentralized and ‘free’ *maka‘āinana* (“commoners”) traditions while obscuring *ali‘i* (“chief, chiefess”) traditions that are more stratified and coercive. Importantly, taro farmers and Hawaiian cultural practitioners do not discard *ali‘i* traditions, rather they recognize it as part of reciprocal relations within integrated traditional society, yet they reappropriate these traditions for their contemporary contexts.

³⁶ This includes private Hawaiian businesses or trusts who benefit from the takings.

³⁷ See news reports from *Democracy Now!* from <http://www.democracynow.org/tags/egypt>.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ See Wendy Brown (1995) for an interesting discussion that problematizes what happens when 'injury' is the primary basis for politics. See also Alfred and Corntassel (2005) for a discussion of colonialism as myth.

⁴⁰ Where we stand and whom we stand with, what we say and who we say it to, is important. Given current political economies and sociocultural registries it's impossible to disavow our privilege, rather, it's essential to utilize our privilege towards changing these very economies and registries.